

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

The Push of the Eagle

- Standard: II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Grade Level: 9–12 (*Note:* Point/counter points)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Represent another point of view to a peer
 - Switch points of view and represent the opposing side to a peer
 - Practice the skill of active listening
- Time: 1 class period
- Materials: Document: **1854** *The Ostend Manifesto*
1858 *Slavery Must Go South*
Exercises: *Point-Counterpoint*
Resources: *Map: The Push of the Eagle*
Map: Central America & the Caribbean
Map: Cuba
- Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The question of the perpetuation of slavery finds itself coming up again and again as the nation seeks new territories. The “push of the eagle” in the quest for Manifest Destiny has some controversial feathers.

In this lesson, students will study two documents that are very different in their points of view about Cuba. They will be asked to accurately present these viewpoints to a peer partner and then summarize what the opposing viewpoint is. The process of active listening requires one to listen very carefully to another and to really focus on what they are saying and how they are saying it and then to be able to paraphrase the ideas. This takes practice since we often interrupt when we hear something with which we do not agree.

At the end of the lesson, students will be asked to reflect on the documents and the reality of either for the nation.

- 1.** Provide students with the three maps—*Push of the Eagle, Central America & the Caribbean, and Cuba*.
- 2.** Have students draw the island of Cuba in the talons (claws) of the Eagle.
- 3.** Discuss the symbolism of this map/drawing. Is it correct to include Cuba in the talons? Why would some Americans during this era include the island in the drawing, while others would not? Is it appropriate to title this map/drawing "Push of the Eagle?" How would other countries in Latin America have reacted to the "Push of the Eagle?"
- 4.** Distribute the exercise, *Point-Counterpoint*.
- 5.** Ask the students to sit in pairs with the two desks facing each other and with their sheets on the desk. Ask them to make a cover sheet for what they are about to record.
- 6.** In each partnership give one student the *Slavery Must Go* Document and give the other partner *The Ostend Manifesto* Document.
- 7.** Ask them to quietly read and make notes in the first box of the points that are being made in their document about the need to secure Cuba for the United States. Do not let the other partner see the notes being written.
- 8.** Ask them to read quickly and succinctly looking for key points of the opposing views. (They do not know yet what the other is going to say.)
- 9.** After enough time, ask them to take turns representing the argument on their points sheet. The first partner will present all his/her points at once while the second partner listens and says nothing but makes a few notes in his column called opponent's points. When the first partner finishes making his points of the argument to take Cuba, the second partner must paraphrase back to partner one all his points. For example saying, "so you are arguing that. . ." If this partner has it all wrong in the paraphrasing, then their partner must re-explain.
- 10.** After this first round of active listening to learn the points of the opponent, the second partner gives his points for taking Cuba, while the first partner listens, says nothing, and makes a few notes in his box that says opponent's views.
- 11.** Once both partners have accurately shared their arguments, then take a quick break and ask each partnership if they feel as though their partners heard their ideas. Discuss this feeling for a few minutes.

- 12.** Now, ask students to switch documents. (No. 2 takes the first document and No. 1 takes the second document.) Have them read quietly and make notes of points in the second set of boxes they now want to make taking the opposite side of what they did in the first round.
- 13.** When they are ready, repeat the *Point-Counter Point* process again.
- 14.** Again review with all partnerships if they feel their arguments were heard, this time ask specifically why they feel that way.
- 15.** As an exit ticket use the Cuba map and ask students to write a reflection on which argument from the documents seems the most logical for the U.S. Why? Collect the sheets.
- 16.** Remind students that this lesson does not end here, They may see their responses again since there is more coming in the future about Cuba and the United States. ■